

Faith in Motion: Religion in the 21st Century

One day symposium: Friday August 15 2014
The Michael Chaney Case Study Room, UWA Business School

Conveners: Debra McDougall, Farida Fozdar, Samina Yasmeen and Mark Jennings

The twenty-first century is often characterized as an era of unprecedented mobility and interconnectivity, but it is also marked by efforts to reinforce national borders and curtail human movement. Paradoxes of mobility and immobility in our increasingly unequal world come into sharp focus when viewed through the lens of religion. Sociologists, anthropologists, and scholars of comparative religion have long called attention to the way that religion constitutes space and place, linking particular localities to encompassing cosmic schemes. The world's major religious traditions emerged in the context of expanding empires and markets becoming, arguably, the first truly global social movements. In the current globalizing context, relocating individuals re-establish religious communities, or transport portable, malleable beliefs and rituals. Some 'lose their religion' in increasingly secular contexts; others adopt 'foreign' religions. What is certain is that religion mutates and accommodates with movement.

With the support of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation '*Faith and Globalisation*' Initiative, the UWA *Mobilities and Belonging* research cluster, and the *Centre for Muslim States and Societies*, we are proud to present the Faith in Motion symposium.

9:00-9.15AM	Welcome – Tea/Coffee
9:15-10:30AM	<p><u>Muslims and Transnationalism</u></p> <p>Shamim Samani (University of Western Australia) <i>Balancing tradition and modernity: Kenya's Asian Sunnis</i></p> <p>Rachman Ida (University of Western Australia) <i>International Connection in the Discourse of Indonesian Shiism: Muslim Blogging and Social Media Activism</i></p> <p>Andrzej Gwizdalski (University of Western Australia) <i>Abu Bakr al Australi and the mobilities of ISIS</i></p> <p>Taufiqur Rahman (University of Western Australia) <i>Social Media and Competing Imagination of Muslim Ummah in Islamic Online Media in Indonesia</i></p>
10:30-11:45AM	<p><u>Issues for Religious Communities</u></p> <p>Jon Bergmann (Harvest West Bible College) <i>περιχώρησις as a Model for a Theological Praxis addressing the Australian Government's response to Illegal Maritime Arrivals</i></p> <p>Wayne L. Belcher (Lake Joondalup Baptist Church) <i>Where Do We Stand? Off Shore Processing of Asylum Seekers</i></p> <p>Jane Anderson (University of Western Australia) <i>Examining the Impact of Globalising Catholicism on the Local Church and the Nation-State in Australia</i></p> <p>Marju Broder (Chair of the International Conference Buddhism & Australia) <i>A Significant Absence? The Academic Study of Buddhism in Western Australia</i></p>

11:45-12:30PM	Lunch (provided for participants and registered attendees only)
12:30-1:45PM	<u>Ritual Construction of Trans-local space</u> Greg Acciaioli (University of Western Australia) <i>The Place of Non-Place in Bugis Ritual: Ethnographically Interrogating Augé's Modernity/Supermodernity Distinction</i> Andrew Alan Johnson (Yale-NUS College) <i>Precarity, Animism and Wildness in Thai-Lao Spirit Cults</i> Loretta Baldassar (University of Western Australia) <i>Perverting autochthony: the local festa as a rite of institution informing public debate on migrant belonging</i> Debra McDougall (University of Western Australia) <i>Cosmopolitan spaces and ancestral ground: Christianity and socio-spatial transformations of the early twentieth century Solomons</i>
1:45-2:45PM	<u>Christianity, Globalisation and Modernity</u> Mark Jennings (University of Western Australia and Murdoch University) <i>An Extraordinary Degree of Exaltation: Durkheim and Pentecostalism's defeat of Secularization</i> John McCormack (Monash University and Swinburne University) <i>Music and Mission – Hillsong in a Global Age</i> Natalie Swann (University of Melbourne) <i>Christianity and Cosmopolitanism: a case study from suburban Melbourne</i>
2:45-3:00PM	Tea/coffee break
3:00-4:00PM	<u>Feminism and Religion in Modernity</u> Olivia Murphy (Murdoch University) <i>The Girl and the Goddess: Echoes of Ancient Religion in Twenty-First Century Film</i> Sharin Shajahan Naomi (Murdoch University) <i>Unfolding the dynamics of the conversation between Tibetan Buddhism and Feminism</i> Olena Dudko (Lund University) Olena Bogdanova (National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy) <i>Women Priests in Ukraine: Overcoming Patriarchal Traditions or Adapting to Them?</i>
4:00-5:00PM	<u>New Religious movements and Religion in New Contexts</u> Olena Bogdanova (National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy) <i>Cognition and Emotion in Conversion to Krishnaism in Ukraine</i> Samina Yasmeen (University of Western Australia) <i>My Eid is your Ramadan</i> Farida Fozdar (University of Western Australia) <i>The Baha'i Faith: a case study in Mobility and the Routinization of Charisma</i>

Faith in Motion: Abstracts

The Place of Non-Place in Bugis Ritual: Ethnographically Interrogating Augé's Modernity/Supermodernity Distinction

Professor Greg Acciaoli *Anthropology and Sociology UWA*

Marc Augé has presented his conceptualisation of “nonplace” as a distinctive characteristic of supermodernity, a stage of cultural development succeeding modernity. This paper argues that non-place has long been a characteristic of some cultural systems, particularly of highly mobile groups like the Bugis of Indonesia. Bugis migrants in Indonesia have carried with them to their places of settlement a ritual system that de-emphasises rootedness in any particular place. Bugis ritual practice rests upon the utilisation of a succession of open frames, whose content can be filled in with invocations to newly encountered local spirits in contexts of migration. These modular frames can be assembled in any number of different sequences to build various sorts of consecration (*assalamakeng*) rituals suited to the constantly changing circumstances of migrants in new locales. Such Bugis ritual can thus be seen as adaptable to contexts of non-place, as articulated by Augé, rather than to any sacred geography of a homeland or other expression of fixed place. Focussing upon the Bugis migrant community in the Lindu plain of Central Sulawesi, this paper emphasises how Bugis use both the paradigmatic and syntagmatic aspects of their ritual frames to constitute a variety of nonplace in a ‘traditional’ context.

Examining the Impact of Globalising Catholicism on the Local Church and the Nation-State in Australia

Dr Jane Anderson *Honorary Research Fellow UWA*

During the papacy of John Paul II, the Roman Catholic Church revised its position as a powerful globalising entity. It actively promoted democracy in the nation-state, advanced human rights and provided a moral compass for humankind. The papacy of Benedict XVI pursued a similar course in the promotion of authentic religion. These papacies held a cosmological view of the Church as universal and promulgated related homogenising policies. The collective notion and practices were vitalised by autocratic governance, fundamentalist-oriented New Religious Movements and conservative diaspora. The respective supervision, influence and engagement contributed substantially to reshaping faith communities in the nation-state. The promotion of the universality of the Church has, however, had a corollary in de-emphasising the local, problematising heterogeneity and creating difficulties for liberal Catholics and their relationship to the nation-state. This paper draws on quantitative data, sociological studies and ethnographic research on progressive Catholicism to examine, firstly, the challenges of globalising religion in the local church and within the nation-state and, secondly, some possibilities for addressing difficulties.

Perverting autochthony: the local festa as a rite of institution informing public debate on migrant belonging

Professor Loretta Baldassar *Anthropology and Sociology UWA*

The intersections of migrant, racialised, and religious belonging were spectacularly evident during an altercation that took place during the annual patron saint festa in Prato, Italy, 2010. Home to one of the largest Chinese migrant communities in Europe, Prato has been living what the locals refer to as “a difficult moment” in history. The economic context is shaped by a beleaguered historical local textile industry perceived by locals to be ‘stolen’ by a new cognate industry of ready-made fashion championed by the Chinese migrants. The left-leaning local government, in office for over 50 years, was defeated by a new right government (with links to Lega Nord) on an overtly anti-Chinese migrant campaign, which appealed to autochthonous centuries old belongings. These political and economic tensions came to a symbolic head at the start of the annual historic religious procession through the streets of the medieval town centre. The left leaning Provincial government invited migrants (many with Italian citizenship) to join their section of the procession. The Mayor and Bishop intervened to publically forbid the migrants from participating, explaining that their

presence perverted (*snaturava*) the historical ritual. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's notion of rites of institution, I examine the local government's and the local parish's claims on the festa over the past few years to explore the shaping of public debate on Chinese in Italy.

Where Do We Stand? Off Shore Processing of Asylum Seekers

Wayne L. Belcher OAM *Associate Pastor, Lake Joondalup Baptist Church*

This paper asks the question "Where do we stand?" on the issue of Off Shore Processing of Asylum Seekers. The question is put as the subject of discussion of a Church Members' meeting, or an Elder Board meeting. In the life of my own local church this is an important question. Not only is it a divisive question currently confronting the broader Australian public, but in a recent "non violent resistance action", three young people from my own church community were involved in an incident at the local office of the Federal Minister for Immigration on the related matter of asylum seeker children being held in detention. This paper provides an appreciation of the contemporary complexity of refugee traffic to Australia, and matters around asylum seeking upon arrival. Biblical and theological perspectives on flight, refugee status and trafficking, the plight of marginalised people, and questions about the humanity of detention – particularly of children in detention, are discussed, as are secular and limited philosophical perspectives on this subject matter. It concludes with a brief schedule of recommendations.

περιχώρησις as a Model for a Theological Praxis addressing the Australian Government's response to Illegal Maritime Arrivals

Jon Bergmann *Lecturer, Harvest West Bible College*

The New Testament occurrence of *η περιχώρησις* has been well explored both epistemologically and theologically. This paper examines the issues of perichoretic interpenetration and – drawing upon Jurgen Moltmann's theology – the idea that "all life is community in communication." Further, it attempts to bring together the understanding of the Perichoretic precedent into a Theological Praxis, which adequately responds to the "No Way" campaign started by the Australian Coalition in 2013. The Australian policy regarding off-shore processing of asylum seekers ("Illegal Maritime Arrivals") has been widely criticized by a number of international human rights committees. Drawing from Christological perspectives that envisage the interpenetration of multiple divine natures into the triune being, this paper proposes such an understanding as the basis for a model of human relationship within the perichoretic model, as it then relates to our relationship and responsibility for each other. The relational dynamics of such a model give insight into the power of reimagining human community in light of a Trinitarian praxis; as such a community giving space and allowance for even the most diverse of expressions and natures.

Cognition and Emotion in Conversion to Krishnaism in Ukraine

Professor Olena Bogdanova *Sociology, National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Ukraine*

Based on in-depth interviews with believers and observations in Kyiv community of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISCON), this paper aims to explore cognitive and affective aspects of conversion to this globalized religious movement in Ukraine. Converting to Krishnaism in a predominantly Christian Eastern European society requires not only inner changes but also accepting new cultural patterns in one's everyday life. In compliance with this faith, a convert not only embraces new spiritual views and practices but also changes his or her diet, sleeping habits, daily aesthetics, mundane routines, and sometimes even family relationships. Becoming a Krishnait in Ukraine implies nearly contradictory personal transformations: becoming more cosmopolitan and, at the same time, gaining a Vedic cultural identity while still remaining Ukrainian. Despite the profound life changes required for conversion, the number of converts in Kyiv grew more rapidly than community's financial capacities: as of now, ISCON temple in Kyiv can hardly accommodate all those believers who would like to participate in Sunday rituals. Hence, this pilot research project aims to identify cognitive and emotional experiences that accompany conversion and help sustain the newly gained faith, despite a number of cultural barriers.

A Significant Absence? The Academic Study of Buddhism in Western Australia
Marju Broder *Chair of the International Conference “Buddhism & Australia”*

Buddhism has been present in Australia for about 150 years and is today the largest non-Christian religion in Australia. The Buddhist community in Western Australia has grown to 47,542 adherents, including a total of 214 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who identify as Buddhist. The main countries of origin for WA Buddhists are Australia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, China, Sri Lanka, Japan and Hong Kong. Every country has its own school and approach to Buddhism, all of which are now present in Australia. Despite this, there is little in the way of Buddhist Studies in WA Universities to this day. Since 2011 several international academic projects, the first of their kind in Australia, have been organized by Vello Vaartnou and a small group of Estonian Nyingma Buddhists in WA. These have resulted in an annual International Conference Buddhism & Australia, an online History of Buddhist Australia (2011) and online Chinese Buddhist Encyclopedia (launched at Berkeley University, 2012). In my presentation I will shortly introduce Estonian Nyingma’s activities and discuss how Vaartnou’s ideas have been realized in Europe and Australia.

Women Priests in Ukraine: Overcoming Patriarchal Traditions or Adapting to Them?

Olena Dudko *Graduate Student, Lund University, Sweden*

Olena Bogdanova *Sociology, National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Ukraine*

After the end of the state atheism policy in the former Soviet Union, intensive Protestant missionary work in Ukraine led to a rapid expansion of Protestant communities in various regions of the country. Women priesthood was among the new practices and ideas that some of Western ministers introduced to their Ukrainian parishioners. Potentially, this could have led to intensifying public feminist discourses in the society. However, debates on women’s ordination are virtually non-existent in Ukrainian media at present. Moreover, about 90% of the Ukrainian population are affiliated with Orthodox and Greek Catholic Churches, both of which deny women priesthood. Thus, Ukrainian women priests find themselves in a predominantly patriarchal religious environment. Do they promote feminist theology and gender equality within their communities? Are they united in interdenominational initiatives aiming to change the status of women in a wider range of Protestant denominations? Are they involved in any global networks campaigning for women ordination in Christianity? Or, on the contrary, do they avoid feminist discourses and find intricate ways to reconcile their status in their religious community with the still prevalent patriarchal views and practices? This paper seeks to contribute to answering these and other relevant questions.

The Baha’i Faith: a case study in Mobility and the Routinization of charisma

Professor Farida Fozdar *Anthropology and Sociology, UWA*

‘Founding Father’ of sociology Max Weber argued that charismatic authority, based on the personal magnetism of a prophetic leader and required at the initial stages of the establishment of religions, is not sustainable. He suggested that the charisma of the founder must be ‘routinized’ in bureaucratic structures that formalise leadership and organisation. The danger in this process is the loss of the ‘spirit’ of the original movement, with an increasing focus on the preservation and replication of formal structures and practices. This paper considers the case study of the Baha’i Faith, a religion founded in the 1860s in Iran, but which quickly mobilised, through a structured program of dissemination through international plans and the movement of “pioneers” (missionaries), to become a worldwide religion whose fundamental orientation is global (it promotes itself as the second most widespread religion in the world). Most recently the process of routinization is evident in the formalising of structures of study and practice in a program called ‘the Ruhi books’ and ‘the institute process’. This paper outlines these developments, and suggest possible causes for the phenomenon, and implications in terms of its global reach.

Abu Bakr al Australi and the mobilities of ISIS

Dr Andrzej Gwizdalski *Honorary Research Fellow UWA*

This paper examines the global expansion of religious extremist movements in the context of the globalisation debate. The focal point of analysis is the extreme radical group of Jihad, ISIS, and their ability to recruit Western Foreign Fighters from around the world. The paper investigates the causes of the growing popularity of ISIS from the perspective of anti-globalisation movements and anti-Western sentiments. However, the study seeks to avoid simplistic divisions into ‘the West and the rest’ and instead pays careful attention to the complexities of personal choices involved in joining radical movements. The paper is informed by qualitative analysis of media content and framed by globalisation theory and religious studies.

International Connection in the Discourse of Indonesian Shiism: Muslim Blogging and Social Media Activism

Dr Rachmah Ida *Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for Muslim State and Society, UWA*

Over the years, Sunni-Shia relations in Indonesia have been marked by unresolved conflict and radicalism Islam in the country. The 2012 attack on a Shia community in Sampang District on Madura Island by the Sunni hard-liners has heightened the national discourse of Sunni-Shia relationship. Statements and claims (positively and negatively) from Muslim scholars and conservative Muslim blogging communities and the social media often claim that transnational movements have distorted the existence of Shia Indonesia and the Shiites identity. “Shia Indonesia has been transformed and influenced by transnational movement,” claimed Azyumardi Azra, a prominent Muslim scholar in Jakarta (cited in *The Jakarta Post* 2013). This statement has marked as a “new” discourse of Shiism in the country. This paper discusses the activism of Shia communities and the anti-Shia *jihad*ers and supporters on the online media during 2012 and 2014. Particularly, it looks at comments and statements raised on the issues of global Shia connection and interference in Indonesia. Using a media content analysis, this ongoing study also investigates how the so-called “transnational movement” have been seen and perceived influencing the Shia of Indonesia by the Muslim blogging communities and the social media activists.

An Extraordinary Degree of Exaltation: Durkheim, Effervescence and Pentecostalism’s defeat of Secularization

Dr Mark Jennings *Faith and Globalisation Fellow, UWA and Sociology, Murdoch University*

Pentecostalism has ‘bucked the trend’ predicted by Emile Durkheim and others that religion would decline and disappear in a secular modern age. In searching for the clues as to why this happened, this paper outlines Durkheim’s thought on the phenomenon that sparks religious life – effervescence – and his belief that in the secular future societies would make use of this phenomenon to create instances of “secular sacralisation.” Following this, the paper traces the development of Pentecostalism, a religious phenomenon that has harnessed the power of effervescence and grown explosively in the “secular” age. Thus, Pentecostalism has appropriated (in part) the role that Durkheim believed society itself would have to fill in a future, secular age, and has reinforced the link between effervescent experience and a transcendent divine entity.

Precarity, Animism, and Wildness in Thai-Lao Spirit Cults

Dr Andrew Alan Johnson *Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Yale-NUS College*

In recent years, anthropology has returned to the notion of “animism” as an analytic that provides a corrective measure to a notion of modernity that implies a static, inactive “natural” object acted upon by an active, thinking “cultural” subject, instead positing a mutually-constituting relationship between the two. Yet “animism” in much of the “turn” is of a particular sort, namely, a system of relation between (human or animal) subjects that recognizes mutual obligation and interdependence. These studies are largely drawn from ethnographic work on circumpolar pastoralists or Amazonian hunter/gatherers. Here, I bring this new focus to bear upon a very different situation: that of Thai-Lao migrant workers in Bangkok. I found that migrants often sought

connections (financial, kinship, or other) between themselves and dangerous spirits (spirits of wild things paved over by the city or of those killed in violent ways) in order to “adopt” or “become adopted by” such spirits, and, I argue here, this action allows for a re-negotiation of their position vis-à-vis accident and trauma. I see becoming a spirit’s “child” as forming a mutually-dependent relationship, and through this relationship allowing for the domestication of forces from outside the social.

Music and Mission – Hillsong in a Global Age

Dr John McCormack *Sociology, Monash University and Swinburne University*

From its inception, Christianity has been a missionary religion, with a local and a global conception of its mission field. Hillsong Church, headquartered in the outer northwestern suburbs of Sydney, has become Australia’s most successful megachurch through the production and dissemination, locally and globally, of the worship music employed at its services. Not only does the church distribute its musical products through online and retail channels; Hillsong also teaches its whole approach to music – composition, deployment throughout a service, production values and the selection of musical personnel – to other churches. The empirical basis of this paper is a study of the employment of Hillsong’s approach to music by some of the megachurches located in the ‘Bible belt’ of the outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne. Adapting Spickard’s six religious narratives model, this paper argues for a missiological understanding of Hillsong’s conception of its role and purpose, and as the motivation for its musical activities. These have the ultimate purpose of offering participants an experience of transcendence – a life-changing encounter with the divine. In a context of consumerism and global communications technologies, it is now possible to offer the prospect of this encounter to a global mission field.

Cosmopolitan spaces and ancestral ground: Christianity and socio-spatial transformations of the early twentieth century Solomons

Associate Professor Debra McDougall *Anthropology and Sociology, UWA*

Conversion to Christianity in much of the Solomon Islands was not only a matter of changing hearts and minds—it also transformed the spatial order. When speaking of pre-Christian times, men and especially women of Ranongga Island mention the fact that they could not move freely, living in fear of hostile enemies and unfamiliar spirits dwelling in the land and sea. Now, we know that there are no strangers, for we are all one in God, brothers and sisters in Christ, and the power of God is greater than those of local powers. Local pastors and teachers battled the emplaced powers of the ancestral dead to open up once-dangerous places to all of Gods people, transform the places of the dead into the places of the living. Today, ancestral powers beyond the margins of settlement continue to repel strangers, but rural villages themselves may be considered cosmopolitan space where people of different islands and languages live together, pulled around the ritual centre of the village church, protected by the over arching power of a God who is (unlike ancestral beings) a God of all humanity. The (partial) removal of ontological connections of people to place (coupled with engagement in plantation capitalism), had consequences beyond liberation—from a local perspective, it has also opened the way for political disputes over land ownership.

The Girl and the Goddess: Echoes of Ancient Religion in Twenty-First Century Film

Dr Olivia Murphy *English, Murdoch University*

Several recent popular films aimed at children and adolescents—*Brave*, *Frozen* and *The Hunger Games* series—have attracted notice for their foregrounding of heroines who explicitly resist the conventional archetypes of the ‘princess’. The young, female protagonists of these (four, going on six) films are each seen to actively reject the appearance and behaviour expected of princesses, eschewing helplessness, ballgowns and marriage to a ‘prince charming’ in favour of torn clothing, prowess in archery, and solidarity with mothers or sisters. In this, they each bear remarkable resemblance to the virgin goddess of the hunt of Greco-Roman polytheism, Artemis/Diana. This paper will investigate the claims made on behalf of these films for feminist innovation by examining their co-option of ancient iconography. Interpreting these films in light of their reliance

on the imagery of Artemis/Diana offers the possibility, not only of understanding some of the most globally beloved characters of contemporary children's and adolescents' culture, but also of intervening in the pernicious stereotyping of girls and young women.

Unfolding the dynamics of the conversation between Tibetan Buddhism and Feminism

Sharin Shajahan Naomi *PhD Candidate, Murdoch University*

Since Tibetan Buddhism or Vajrayana Buddhism is becoming increasingly popular in the Western countries, a significant number of women are accepting Tibetan Buddhism as religious and spiritual practice. Feminist scholars have critically shed insight on this particular religion in terms of women's equality, agency, subjectivity, and freedom as well as cultural conflicts. In this respect, the existing feminist scholars have relied on theoretical underpinnings to understand the interaction between Tibetan Buddhism and feminism in women's lives. I am going to use embodied experiences from the real life stories of Buddhist women practitioners to invoke a new understanding of the relationship between feminism and Tibetan Buddhism. This understanding reveals a heterogeneous, and organic conversation between Tibetan Buddhism and feminism including gender inequality in the religious institutions, gender issues in the hierarchical relationship between Guru and disciple, dealing with economic constraints and family and personal matters, resolving cultural issues in the Western context etc. In this way, this paper will contribute in unfolding the rich, interactive, enmeshed and nuanced dynamics between a religion like Tibetan Buddhism and feminism, linking myriad issues including personal, political, social, cultural, and religious.

My Eid is your Ramadan

Professor Samina Yasmeen *Director, Centre for Muslims States and Societies*

The celebration of Eid-ul-Fitr around the world is always mired in controversies about the precise day when it would be celebrated. The differences over the procedures to be followed to determine that the month of Ramadan has ended and the new moon for the month of Sha'waal has been cited often result in people in the same country celebrating Eid on different days. Muslim minorities in western liberal societies also are beginning to experience these differences of opinion due to a number of factors. This paper will analyse the nature of those factors with reference to the celebration of Eid-ul-Fitr in Australia. It will explore the debates, differences, sources of information and identities that determine the choice of days to celebrate and the attempts being made to negotiate among differing opinions with a view to encourage shared experiences. The paper will also explore the implications of these differences for intra-Muslim solidarity and for the relations between Muslims and the wider community.

Social Media and Competing Imagination of Muslim *Ummah* in Islamic Online Media in Indonesia

Taufiqur Rahman *PhD Candidate, UWA*

This paper will investigate the idea of participatory culture in the current development of Islamic online news services in Indonesia. The paper will argue that the participatory culture of the internet has played an important role in the process of re-construction and re-imagination of the idea of Muslim *ummah*. This participatory culture has been developed mainly through the possibility for readers to contribute to the publication by submitting their opinions to the editors, writing comments in the comments section provided on the website or sharing items with their friends in social network sites. Moreover, the personalised tendency of the current internet news services and social network sites has contributed to the development of new imagined communities on the internet. While the boundary of the nation state has collapsed, a new boundary has been created by the idea of personalised media. The users of the internet have become more and more connected with their in-group, who share many similarities and at the same time become more and more isolated from other groups which have a different point of view or those who do not share similar identities.

Balancing tradition and modernity: Kenya's Asian Sunnis
Dr Shamim Samani *Honorary Research Fellow, UWA*

This paper examines the social and economic patterns of the Asian Sunni Muslims of the Kenyan coast. It focuses on their development course in the context of historical and contemporary factors that affect the minority, migrant group that has been a part of the East African coastal landscape for centuries. Its relocation connected to the old and new influences of migration, modernization, globalisation and Islamisation have all impacted this small community that still retains much of its cultural base brought over from the Indian sub-continent. The paper explores how historical and current global issues are linked and how various persuasions have relevance as the community fits into the contemporary globalized, modern environment and how it finds a way to balance its secular needs within its religious base. The paper also gives an insight into how a diasporic Muslim community balances its traditional outlook and religious orientation in the context of intensified global connections.

Christianity and cosmopolitanism: a case study from suburban Melbourne
Natalie Swann *PhD Candidate, University of Melbourne*

Christianity is often seen as a cosmopolitanising force (or perhaps a form of Appiah's 'toxic cosmopolitanism'). It frequently demands primary allegiance above other identifications and binds believers into the imagined church universal. This narrative of cosmopolitanism stands in contrast to the Australian experience of a multiplicity of churches accommodating ethnic and theological difference; a church landscape which reflects Australia's migration heritage (Bouma 1997). Unlike other studies which invoke ethnicity as an organising principle (e.g. Ata 1988a, 1988b, 1990), this study sought to move beyond the 'ethnic lens' (Glick-Schiller et al 2006). It sought to walk alongside believers in one Australian locality irrespective of their migration background. I conducted participant observation and interviews with members of three churches in one suburb of Melbourne; two multicultural churches that worship in English (one Roman Catholic and one Seventh Day Adventist) and one Arabic speaking Baptist congregation that is mostly Egyptian and Iraqi. This paper explores the way multicultural community is celebrated in each of these three congregations and it contrasts the faith and migration journeys of a number of individuals to explore the way their faithful practice has been transformed through movement, which simultaneously fosters an awareness of the universal and particular.